GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:902
ANSWERED ON:21.07.2016
Contaminated Drinking Water
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Will the Minister of DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether hazardous chemicals including arsenic and fluoride and other contaminants have been found in excessive quantity in drinking water in various parts of the country, and if so, the details thereof, habitation-wise and State/UT-wise;
(b) the number and percentage of habitations/households reported to be affected therefrom alongwith the remedial steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard, State/UT-wise during each of the last three years and the current year and the time by which all these habitations are likely to be provided with safe drinking water; (c) the financial and technical assistance provided by the Government to improve the situation and to continuously monitor the same during the above period, State/UT-wise;
(d) whether most of the drinking water sources in the country are contaminated by sewage and agriculture run off and if so, the details thereof, and the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government for providing safe drinking water to the people;
(e) whether the Government has implemented schemes to make available drinking water through solar energy based dual pumps in remote areas in various States;
(f) if so, the details of funds allocated and released during each of the last three years and the current year including physical targets achieved, State-wise; and
(g) whether safe drinking water is a fundamental right of every citizen in the country, and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE
IN THE MINISTRY OF DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION
(SHRI RAMESH CHANDAPPA JIGAJINAGI)

(a) The State-wise number of water quality affected habitations reported by the States into the online Integrated Management Information System as on 18/7/2016 is at Annexure-I. This inter-alia include State-wise number of arsenic, fluoride and heavy metal affected habitations.

(b) The number of water quality affected habitations reported as on 1/4/2014, 1/4/2015, 1/4/2016 and as on date (18/7/2016) along with percentage of such habitations affected as on date, State-wise, is at Annexure-II. All States have been advised to accord priority to provide safe drinking water in water quality affected habitations with special focus on coverage of arsenic and fluoride affected habitations. As per Strategy Plan of the Ministry, 90% of the rural population would be provided with safe drinking water by the year 2022 through surface water based piped water supply schemes, subject to availability of funds. However, with the recommendation of NITI Aayog, the Government of India had released Rs 800 crore in March' 2016 to provide community water purification plants in all remaining arsenic and fluoride affected habitations by March' 2017 so that 8-10 litres per person per day of safe drinking water is made available in these arsenic and fluoride affected habitations for drinking and cooking purposes, as large piped water supply schemes take a long gestation period for commissioning.

(c) State-wise funds released under the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) during the last three years and current financial year is at Annexure-III. In order to facilitate States, a Handbook on Drinking Water Treatment Technologies has been provided. Further, a High level Technical Committee under the chairmanship of Dr R.A.Mashelkar had been constituted by the Committee to shortlist innovative and proven technologies and provide a basket of options to the States for them to choose the appropriate technology suitable to local conditions. All activities of providing safe water is monitoring closely through video-conferences, Annual Action Plan meetings, review meetings at regular intervals of time.

(d) In the rural areas of the country, toilet sub-structure suggested is pour flush twin pit toilet. If any drinking water lies within the vicinity of the toilet, there is a probability of bacteriological contamination. Therefore States have been advised to conduct sanitary survey of all drinking water sources so that the possibility of bacteriological contamination could be proved and in such cases States have been advised to seal all leakages and disinfect the sources. As on date, States have not reported any contamination of drinking water sources due to agricultural runoff.

(e) & (f) In the year 2012-13 and 2013-14, with the help of National Clean Energy Fund (NCEF) from the Ministry of Finance and NRDWP, 10,000 solar based dual pumps have been in Left Wing Extremist/ naxal affected States so that safe drinking water is made available to small rural tribal habitations through taps. Unit cost of each solar dual pump is fixed at a maximum of Rs 5.1 lakh, which was subsequently reduced to Rs 4.9 lakh. Therefore, the overall target got enhanced to 11,068. Against this target, achievement reported is 9,623. 40% of funds required for solar panels and solar pump is provided from NCEF. The remaining 60% funds is to be shared equally between Centre (from NRDWP) and matching State share. The State-wise physical target, achievement and funds released under NCEF to States during the last three years and till date is at Annexure- IV.

With the scheme getting very popular and liked by the remote rural population, another 20,000 solar based dual pumps have been targeted in the year 2015-16 with funding from NRDWP and subsidy for solar panels from Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE). Subsequently, the overall target got reduced by MNRE to 15,400. The funds other than subsidy from MNRE has to be shared between Centre (from NRDWP) and matching State Share. However, States have been given the flexibility of using 10% NRDWP-Sustainability funds provided to States for procuring solar panels and solar pump. Against this, the achievement reported is 5,004. The State-wise revised physical target, and achievement made till date using NRDWP funds and MNRE subsidy is at Annexure- V.

(g) As per the guidelines of National Rural Drinking Water Programme, Water is a public good and every person has the right to demand drinking water. It is the lifeline activity of the Government to ensure that this basic need of the people is met.

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